# GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
# ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
# LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:995
ANSWERED ON:05.03.2008
DECREASING FOREST COVER
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**Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:**

(a) whether the forest cover is going down dated year by year as reported in the Live mint dated February 13,2008;

(b) if so, the details of the forest cover in the country at present as compared to year 2000 - 2003;

(c) the reasons for its downtrend; and

(d) the corrective measures taken by the Government to maintain the forest cover?

## Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS(SHRI S.REGUPATHY)

(a) No, Sir.

(b) The Forest Survey of India carries out forest cover assessment of the country using remote sensing technology once every two years and publishes the findings in 'State of Forest Report'. The forest covers of the country as per 2001, 2003 and 2005 assessments are given below:

| Assessment Year | 2001 | 2003 | 2005 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Forest Cover(in km2) | 653,898 | 677,816 | 677,088 |

It can be seen that the forest cover of the country has increased by 23,918 km2 between 2001 and 2003 assessments,and decreased marginally by 728 km2 between 2003 and 2005 assessments.

(c) The main reasons for the marginal reduction in forest cover as per 2005 assessment are destruction caused by Tsunami in Andaman & Nicobar Islands in December 2004, submergence of forest land due to construction of dams in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh and shifting cultivation as well as bamboo flowering in the North-East Region of the country.

(d) The government of India has taken following steps to maintain forest cover

1. Under National Afforestation Plan (NAP) Scheme Rs 1180.72 crores were released to support 729 FDA projects through 24,215 JFMCs for treating a total project area of 9.36 lakh ha.

2. A restructured scheme for Grants-in-Aid for Greening India was launched in 2005-06 to promote production and use of quality planting material in tree planning.

3. As a follow-up of the Mid-Term Appraisal of 10th Five Year Plan, a new scheme for afforestation involving Panchayati Raj Institution for tree planning on non-forest lands is mooted.

4. Establishment of two new Eco-Task Force (ETF) battalions for eco-restoration of degraded areas was mooted by the Ministry, in addition to supporting the existing four ETF battalions.

5. States have been advised to constitute State-level coordination committee under chairmanship of Chief Secretaries for eliciting cooperation of all land-owning Departments for contributing towards increase in forest and tree cover.

6. The Ministry has mooted a Multi-Stake Holder partnership (MSP) framework for forestation.

7. Guidelines have been issued by Government of India on 15-12-2004 to the States for rationalization of regulatory provision about felling and transport of trees grown on private lands.

8. State Government and Union Territories Administrations have been requested to formulate and implement a comprehensive Media Plan to create awareness about tree planting.